

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 FRB-01
OMB-01 /046 W
-----094900 050913Z /21

R 041405Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO USDA/FAS WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7468

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

UNCLAS VIENNA 07046

FAS FOR GRAIN & FEED/NOVOTNY FROM AGATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR,EPAP,ETRD,CZ

SUBJ: CZECHOSLOVAK GRAIN IMPORT NEEDS 1978/79

1. AGATTACHE AND NEW ECON/COMM OFF MET CHALUPA AND HOLUB
OF KOOSPOL (FTO) AUGUST 3RD TO DISCUSS CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S
GRAIN SITUATION AND IMPORT NEEDS. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR
POINTS MADE BY KOOSPOL OFFICIALS:

- (A) CZECHOSLOVAKIA IMPORTED 375,000 TONS OF US CORN
DURING FIRST HALF OF 1978, BRINGING TOTAL IMPORTS OF
CORN, THUS FAR, TO ABOUT 500,000 TONS. THEY DO NOT
ANTICIPATE ADDITIONAL PURCHASES UNTIL MORE IS KNOWN ABOUT
THE CURRENT CZECHOSLOVAK GRAIN HARVEST.

- (B) KOOSPOL OFFICIALS EXPECT TO IMPORT AGAIN ABOUT
500,000 TONS OF CORN DURING 1978/79 SEASON. THIS TONNAGE
MAY BE HIGHER IF DOMESTIC CORN CROP FAILS TO MEET THE
TARGETED .8 TO 1.0 MILLION TONS.

- (C) THE IMPORTANCE OF HUNGARY AS A POTENTIAL SUPPLIER
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OF CORN DURING COMING SEASON MAY DIMINISH SINCE CORN
ACREAGE THIS YEAR IN THAT COUNTRY IS SMALLER THAN THAT
OF 1977. THIS MEANS CZECHOSLOVAKIA MAY BE TURNING AGAIN
TO THE WEST FOR MAJOR PORTION OF ITS CORN NEEDS.

- (D) WHILE DISCUSSING HARVEST PROSPECTS FOR 1978,
KOOSPOL OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO

JUDGE OUTCOME SINCE GOOD WEATHER, FOR EXAMPLE, DURING COMING WEEKS COULD IMPROVE SUBSTANTIALLY HARVEST CONDITIONS. THEY WERE SURE, HOWEVER, THAT THE 1978 GRAIN CROP WOULD SURPASS THE TEN MILLION TONS EVEN IF THE CORN CROP REMAINS SOMEWHAT BELOW EXPECTATIONS.

-(E) IF GOOD WEATHER, WHICH PREVAILED DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS IN JULY, CONTINUES FOR THE NEXT TWO TO THREE WEEKS, THIS MAY ADD BETWEEN 100 TO 200 KG. TO THE YIELDS PER HECTARE.

2. COMMENT: THE GROWING DEMAND FOR MEAT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA CONTINUES TO REQUIRE INCREASED QUANTITIES OF GRAIN (AS WELL AS PROTEIN FEEDS). THE MODERATELY INCREASED DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF GRAIN BARELY COVERS ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRAIN BY LIVESTOCK SECTOR. MEAT CONSUMPTION PER CAPITA IN 1978 WILL REACH 84 KG., AND ANOTHER 1.5 KG. INCREASE IS ANTICIPATED IN 1979.

3. CORN PRODUCTION, AS REPORTED EARLIER, IS LIKELY TO REMAIN AT .8 MILLION TONS OR BELOW EVEN IF FAVORABLE WEATHER CONTINUES. FOR THIS REASON, CORN IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR 1978/1979 SHOULD BE SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN EXPECTED EARLIER.

4. THE IMPACT OF GOOD WEATHER, WHICH MAY ADD BETWEEN 100 TO 200 KG. TO YIELDS PER HECTARE, IS TRANSLATED TO BETWEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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250,000 TO 550,000 TONS EXTRA GRAIN. UNDER MOST FAVORABLE CONDITIONS, THEREFORE, TOTAL GRAIN HARVEST MAY APPROACH 10.8 MILLION TONS IN 1978. WOLF

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: IMPORTS, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VIENNA07046
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780321-0573
Format: TEL
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780895/aaaadbzr.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 26871d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1828712
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CZECHOSLOVAK GRAIN IMPORT NEEDS 1978/79
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, ETRD, CZ
To: AGR
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/26871d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014